

Thanks for visiting my FY 2011 Appropriations webpage. This webpage is designed to increase transparency and accountability in the federal appropriations process and to give my constituents a say in determining federal spending priorities.

Below, you will find information about the appropriations process, how to submit a request for the current fiscal year, and what the Democratically-controlled Congress is doing to bring more accountability and transparency to earmark requests.

First, it's important to clarify what constitutes an "earmark." An earmark is a direction from Congress to the executive branch that specifies or designates how federal funds should be spent. Contrary to popular belief, earmarks in the annual appropriations bills do not increase federal spending. Rather, they are a way for Congress to direct how federal dollars are spent in annual funding bills.

Generally speaking, I support congressional earmarks in the federal appropriations process. The United States Constitution clearly places the responsibility to spend the public's money in the hands of Congress, not in the hands of the President or federal bureaucracies.

As the elected representative of the 4th Congressional District, I believe I have a better understanding of the needs of our communities than Washington bureaucrats, who would otherwise direct the funds. I make decisions about what projects to support after input from constituents, county commissioners, city officials, and other members of the community. And I only support the most meritorious projects that provide real benefits to taxpayers and that I would be happy to defend to any of my constituents.

Further, I believe in the benefits of the projects I support. I am pleased to have secured funding for crucial transportation and infrastructure projects, wastewater systems in rural communities, K-12 and university educational programs, job training programs, public safety funds, and projects to clean up and improve our environment. These projects have created and sustained jobs, improved the economic vitality of our cities and counties, and helped leverage additional investments in our communities.

I am aware of the abuses to the earmark process and have serious concerns about some of the wasteful spending in Washington. The fact is, when Republicans took over Congress in 1994, there were 4,000 earmarks in federal appropriations bills. At the end of the 109th Congress in 2005, there were 15,000 earmarks. Former President Bush and his Republican colleagues

promised fiscal responsibility but delivered nearly quadruple the number of earmarks that helped erode public trust in our government.

In response, the Democratically-controlled Congress and Administration have implemented strong reforms, which I fully support. Since re-gaining control of Congress, Democrats have cut earmarks to 50% of 2006 levels and less than 1% of the discretionary budget. The Democratic Congress and President Obama have also agreed to the following reforms that will cut the number of earmarks and improve accountability:

- 1) All earmark requests must be disclosed to the public online when the request is initially made to appropriators;
- 2) Members must certify that they (and their spouses) have no personal financial interest in the request;
- 3) The appropriate executive review committee will have 20 days to evaluate the eligibility and merit of requested earmarks;
- 4) The Appropriations Committee will provide early public disclosure in each appropriations bill by identifying every earmark and the requesting Member; and
- 5) All earmarks to for-profit parties are subject to the competitive bid process.

It is important for Congress to fund needed projects in our communities in a fiscally responsible way. The reforms implemented by the Democratically-controlled Congress to the earmark process will help this cause immensely. As I begin reviewing appropriations request for Fiscal Year 2011, you can be sure that I will continue to advocate for full transparency, accountability, and restraint for congressional earmarks.

To access my Fiscal Year 2011 Appropriations Request Form, [please click here](#) .

To access a complete list of Fiscal Year 2010 projects I submitted to the House Committee on Appropriations, please [click here](#).